

Wilmette Institute Faculty Meeting

June 26, 2016

Agenda

- 1. Using "Quality Matters" to upgrade the quality of our courses
- 2. New Personal Learning Plan guidelines
- 3. Pursuing relationships with universities to arrange for learners to obtain university credit for certain courses
- 4. Developing courses for youth, seekers, and supporting Advanced Clusters
- 5. Figuring out how we can go from one type of course (the type we have been running) to three types (academic type, youth/seeker type, and the "continuing and professional education" type we have been running)
- 6. Courses in other languages
- 7. Developing faculty teams for various subjects
- 8. New directions
- 9. Hearing from you

Quality Matters

- "Quality Matters" is a nonprofit organization that has developed 8 general standards and 43 specific review standards to measure the quality of online courses
- We have subscribed to QM
- We can pay faculty to get the basic QM training
- QM standards aim at “alignment” of unit objectives, readings, appropriate technology, and evaluation of learning so they all support learning
- http://www.sfcc.edu/files/ncate/exhibits/qm-annotated_rubric.pdf

Bloom's Taxonomy

- We need to create learning objectives for each course overall and each study unit based on the active verbs in Blooms Taxonomy
- <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/RevisedBloomsHandout-1.pdf>

New Personal Learning Plan Guidelines

- 1. Completing a learning self assessment at the end of the course. (required, to get a certificate of completion)
- 2. How much work you will do in each unit
- 3. Personal transformation. Consider how the course will effect a change in your attitudes, beliefs, and values
- 4. Community Building. Make a list of ways you can use the course locally to strengthen community
- 5. A formal course project at the end of the course. We highly recommend that everyone do at least one related to the course. These might be more organized and formal versions of tasks in #3 or #4 above
- <http://wilmetteinstitute.org/ourcourses/how-to-create-your-personal-learning-plan-plp/>

Results

- Students have responded very well
- Faculty help:
- “Donna, thank you for sharing your PLP. All the points are eminently practical. My heart was cheered by your plan to make use of what you learn, by making notes and then using these as you make presentations, have conversations and discussions and tell stories. Wonderful!”

More Faculty Feedback

- I'm impressed and encouraged by your fourth and fifth objectives. They look demanding, but will be such good things to do. Finding or making spaces for reflection on the course and on your learning will be most important. The Universal House of Justice emphasizes the importance of reflection in all that we do.
- And developing material to integrate into your children's classes, junior youth groups and study circles - yes, Book 8, Unit 2, is the obvious choice; what you study in this course will reinforce that Unit very well - is such a good way to make use of what you learn to the benefit of others.

More Faculty Feedback

- “I'd like to suggest one more objective, and that is to complete the Learning Self Assessment at the end of the course. This is an important element of the course and completing it will really help you consolidate your learning. Perhaps you might consider adding that to your PLP.”

University Partnerships

- We are pursuing relationships with various universities and graduate schools to arrange for learners to obtain university credit for certain courses
- We need your help with this effort
- We have a beautiful Prospectus document you can take to a school near you
- We will start with one or two courses and make sure they meet academic standards

Courses for youth, seekers, and supporting Advanced Clusters

- Our course on the Hands of the Cause for year of service volunteers has been quite inspirational and we want to use it as a model for other courses.
- It focused on stories about qualities the Hands demonstrated
- It used a lot of video as well
- It will include a lot of live video interaction next time

From One Course Type to Three

- Our current type is the “continuing and professional education” type
- QM has guidelines for them (identical to academic standards except for evaluation of work, which is more informal)
- Our university courses will be an “academic type”
- Then there are courses for youth, seekers, and advanced clusters
- We want to serve the Baha'i community more AND improve the "outward orientation" of our courses more (which are potentially conflicting directions)
- We need your help to define the standards of these types.

Courses in Other Languages

- In the last year we have had proposals for courses in Spanish, Portuguese, Persian, and Arabic
- A course in Portuguese is scheduled
- A course for Persian Bahá'í women in North America has been suggested
- Moodle can be set so that its menus appear in almost any language
- Any additional languages will require support (I can't help people with password problems in Arabic)

Developing faculty teams ("departments")

- The marriage faculty function as a team, meeting together regularly, planning what courses they want to teach, and discussing ways to modify the standard Wilmette Institute format to make it better
- We also have a team for Climate Change and Sustainable Development courses
- What subjects might need teams? The Bahá'í authoritative texts? World Religions?
- Who would like to be involved?

New Directions

- The Web Talks have worked out very well and will continue
- We are doing more and more webinars (courses for pay that primarily use video as the teaching medium) and we want people to use video in their courses (we can help train you and we can do the recording)
- We'd like to start web video conferences on specialized topics (perhaps three presentations in a three hour session, for free or a small registration fee)
- We'd even like to fund raise in order to offer small research grants

Other Matters

- We badly need help with professional editing; we can't expand our web publishing without it
- We have always been independent of the Bahá'í Funds, but the academic and youth/cluster initiatives will require subsidy, and they will be available
- We are increasing our fund raising goal by \$10,000 per year (45k last year; we did it!)
- We hope to expand our staff somewhat so we can support new initiatives, do more training, provide more resources

Thank you!

- The faculty are the Wilmette Institute's greatest strength
- Your ideas and creativity move us forward; you are our engine
- We need your ideas, contacts, and time!